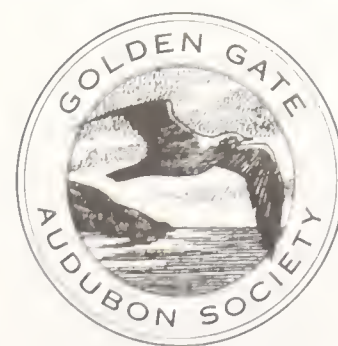


THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Double-crested Cormorants nesting on Lake Merritt's bird islands.

Promising Improvements for Oakland Waterways

Golden Gate Audubon is privileged to have within its territory the nation's first wildlife refuge. That's right. In 1869 Oakland Mayor Dr. Samuel Merritt built a dam across San Antonio Slough to control tidal flow into and out of a part of the slough that would later come to bear his name. A year later, he mounted a successful effort to persuade the California Legislature to enact a law to ban the hunting of birds from the shores of the slough.

Other actions by the City of Oakland over the years, however, have not been as supportive of the natural values of the tidal estuary that came to be known as Lake Merritt. Efforts to control tidal flow into and out of the lake, the filling of the lake's shoreline, and the construction of concrete bulkheads destroyed virtually all of the slough's intertidal mudflats and the wildlife habitat that they supported.

Despite these and other insults, Lake Merritt today provides habitat for a wide variety of migratory and resident waterbirds, especially diving and dabbling ducks attracted to the shallow-water environment. A perusal of Golden Gate Audubon's schedule of field trips over the years reveals that Lake Merritt's accessibility, combined with the abundance and diversity of bird species, make the lake, along with

OAKLAND WATERWAYS continued on page 10

Join the Quail Restore-A-Thon

For the fourth consecutive year, Golden Gate Audubon is sponsoring a special workday, Saturday, November 18, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., dedicated to enhancing California Quail habitat at the Presidio in San Francisco. Mark your calendar now and join other enthusiastic volunteers in removing invasives and planting native vegetation that supports San Francisco's official city bird.

Volunteers provide their time to this effort, but the Save the Quail Campaign also needs money to help guarantee its success. If you cannot participate in the field, you can assist us in raising funds. By sponsoring a volunteer or the Golden Gate Audubon volunteer team for four hours at \$15 per hour, you will be contributing \$60 to the campaign. If you are able to join us, you can sponsor yourself and also ask friends and family to fund your four hours of work. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.

Golden Gate Audubon is dedicated to restoring healthy quail numbers through our monthly workdays as well as these annual Restore-A-Thons held in conjunction with the Presidio Trust and the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. If you come on November 18, not only will you be helping the quail, but you're guaranteed to have fun in the company of other dedicated volunteers. To sign up, fill out and mail in the form on page 11 or go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.



3 Workday at Pier 94 in San Francisco

5 October Speaker Series

8 New Fall Classes

ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the last Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

The Gull is published nine times per year by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

Design and layout e.g. communications

Assessing Golden Gate Audubon's Progress and Looking Ahead

Each summer, Golden Gate Audubon's board of directors and staff meet during a retreat to assess our work. This is an important time to review recent accomplishments and to focus on the most critical ways we can enjoy and protect birds and other wildlife. We have much to celebrate from this past year:

- Conducting a successful bird census and field trip program at Eastshore State Park
- Creating a new wetland habitat at San Francisco's Pier 94
- Suing the County of Alameda for permitting thousands of illegal bird kills at Altamont Pass each year, and working toward a long-term solution for wind energy and birds
- Reaching more than 700 students with bird and wildlife classes
- Engaging roughly 3,000 underserved East Oakland community members in exploring and restoring their local watershed through the Eco-Oakland Program
- Launching a Volunteer and Membership Development Program to help people like you get involved in our work and to thank you for making our successes possible

One key to our success is focusing our energies. To this end, we have identified six priorities for our conservation work in 2006–07. They include four places where birds are at risk due to threats such as habitat loss and human activities: reducing the illegal raptor kills at Altamont Pass; securing the future of the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, critical nesting area for the endangered California Least Tern; protecting Western Snowy Plovers at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; and our Save the Quail campaign (see page 1 for our upcoming Quail Restore-A-Thon). We will also concentrate on two critical shoreline restorations: the wetland at San Francisco's Pier 94 (see page 3 for our next work party) and a conservation planning project, including a bird census, along the Richmond shoreline.

We also identified priorities for our education programs: strengthening our highly successful Eco-Oakland Program, as well as our field trips, classes, and Christmas Bird Count. In addition, we will increase our bird and wildlife class offerings and expand our classes to San Francisco and other venues in the East Bay (see page 4).

As always, we invite you to be a part of our work—through volunteerism, financial support, or Supporting Membership. I look forward to working with you to accomplish our goals and to sharing our successes with you throughout the year.

by Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director

Double Your Support of Golden Gate Audubon!

One of the easiest ways to increase your support of Golden Gate Audubon is through your employer's matching gift program. Thousands of companies, foundations, not-for-profit organizations, and associations match their employees' charitable contributions, sometimes for as much as double the amount of the initial gift.

Companies have various methods for requesting a matching gift: online forms, automated phone systems, or a paper form that you submit to Golden Gate Audubon. Many companies will match personal gifts, such as cash, stocks, marketable securities, and even the value of your volunteer time. Some may also match gifts from employee spouses, retirees, and board members. To take part in a matching gift program, contact your employer's human resources office to determine if your company matches employee donations. Then obtain a matching gift form, complete the donor section of the form, and submit it, along with your check or credit card authorization, to Golden Gate Audubon.



CONSERVATION CORNER

YOU'RE INVITED TO PIER 94

Come out to discover a salt marsh in the making and help us nurture it along. On Saturday, November 11, from 9 a.m. to noon, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers will plant hundreds of native plants and enjoy a chance to see dozens of birds using this restored wetland owned by the Port of San Francisco. Last April, on Earth Day, GGA volunteers removed truckloads of trash and invasive plants and observed some 30 species, including Great and Snowy Egrets, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, and American Avocets. On November 11, we will supply the tools, work gloves, and plenty of refreshments. The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department and Literacy for Environmental Justice are generously donating the plants. You just provide your hands and a few hours of your time.

To reach Pier 94, take Third Street to Cargo Way. Turn east, toward the bay, and then take the first left onto Amador Street. Follow it all the way to the end, turn right, park on the left near the chain-link fence. Look for the Port of San Francisco sign near the entrance to Pier 94. For more information, contact Volunteer and Membership Development Coordinator Michael Martin at mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.7295.

VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 90

This November, Californians will vote on one of the most egregious initiatives to reach the state ballot in decades. Proposition 90 would effectively abolish our ability to pass or enforce basic laws that protect our open space, farmland, coastline, wildlife, air and water quality, and other natural resources.

Under Proposition 90, virtually any "government action" taken to protect the environment, including urban growth boundaries, enforcement of the Endangered Species Act, pollution regulations, water quality laws, and restrictions on timber harvest and offshore drilling, could result in landowners receiving huge payments from state and local governments. Proposition 90 requires government to compensate property own-



Peter Bye

California Sea-blite (Suaeda californica), a federally endangered species reintroduced at Pier 94.

ers for any economic impact of government regulation on the use of private property. Furthermore, when the government (ultimately the taxpayers) cannot afford to pay the landowner, the environmentally destructive actions are allowed to proceed.

Proposition 90 is modeled after Oregon's infamous Measure 37, which passed statewide in the 2004 election. Copycat measures are now being proposed in states across the country as part of a national agenda funded by well-organized development interests.

Land-use planning is essential for regulating future uses of an area that are potentially incompatible with existing uses. A mining operation, for example, is undesir-

able right next to rural residential land. But Proposition 90 will result in thousands of frivolous lawsuits for incompatible uses like this one. More than 2,700 such claims have already been filed to develop 143,000 acres in Oregon since November 2004, with claimants seeking nearly \$4 billion in compensation. Here are some of the claims being filed for compensation: converting berry farms into high-density housing, drilling geothermal test wells inside the Newberry National Monument, and launching a large gravel mining operation within 200 feet of neighboring homes. In nearly every case that has been settled, local governments, handcuffed by Measure 37, have agreed to waive the regulations in question.

Following in the footsteps of the deceptively named "Clear Skies" and "Healthy Forest" initiatives, Proposition 90, the "Protect our Homes" Initiative, is not about property rights for landowners or limiting government regulation. Strong regulations, if done correctly, increase quality of life and raise property values by protecting you and your land from the potentially adverse uses of nearby landowners. Likewise, strong environmental laws preserve wildlife and habitat for the enjoyment of future generations.

Proposition 90 is about putting the interests of a few above the interests of all Californians. Vote "no" on Proposition 90. Visit www.noprop90.org for more information.

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 4

New Save the Quail Coordinator

Golden Gate Audubon welcomes Bill Murphy as the new coordinator of our Save the Quail program in San Francisco. Bill, who holds a BS in Environmental Design from the University of Massachusetts, has extensive experience working with volunteers on Bay Area community projects that involve habitat improvement.

Bill invites you to join him on October 14 at the Presidio and on October 28 at Harding Park when volunteers will maintain and enhance habitat for California Quail. Work begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon. We provide gloves and tools, as well as refreshments. If you can join us, you'll be helping the quail as well as meeting other volunteers who are passionate about restoring wildlife habitat in city parks. For park directions and additional information about the workdays, contact Michael Martin, Volunteer and Membership Development Coordinator, at 510.843.7295 or mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org.

Volunteer Uses Skills to Analyze Bird Census Data

For Golden Gate Audubon member and active volunteer Charlotte Nolan, retirement does not mean “kick back and relax.” After a full career as a professional librarian, including 15 years teaching library and information science at the University of California, Berkeley, Charlotte now uses her expertise to benefit Golden Gate Audubon and Bay Area birds. Since 2000, she has been designing database management systems and entering data for GGA’s bird counts at Arrowhead Marsh, Yosemite Slough, and, most recently, Eastshore State Park. She also participates in the surveys, going out once a month to count birds.

“As a librarian and information science instructor for many years, I was familiar with the design and use of database management systems,” she says. “I always hoped that someday I could apply these skills to my personal and political interests. So designing and maintaining the databases for GGA projects is a dream come true.”

In designing surveys, she says, “You have to think about the end results. Why are we doing the survey? What do we want from the data? For Golden Gate Audubon, we



Charlotte Nolan at Desert Woodlands State Park, west of Lancaster in the Antelope Valley.

not only count birds—we also identify what parts of the park are used by what species, and the effects of tides, weather, and time of year on species numbers. All of this is recorded and entered in the database. Then we can create queries and organize the data in a variety of ways. We have also tracked breeding, although it’s much harder to doc-

ument accurately breeding activity.”

Data from the recently completed Eastshore State Park survey, involving 50 volunteers, will be compiled into a final report by Charlotte and GGA board member Bob Lewis, also a bird census expert. It will also be used to create a illustrated comprehensive checklist of birds made available to all park visitors.

“What means the most to me,” Charlotte says, “is the usefulness of the data. When the Water Transit Authority wanted to know where ducks congregate near the Eastshore State Park shoreline, for studies of potential new ferry service, we had useful information for them. I’m very excited by that.”

When Charlotte retired and began devoting more time to environmental causes, she joined Golden Gate Audubon. “I would not be doing this work unless I felt strongly about GGA’s conservation goals,” she says. “Much is discouraging about this world, but meeting and working with the Golden Gate staff and other volunteers give me both hope and a good deal of pleasure.”

by Marjorie Blackwell,
President, Golden Gate Audubon Board

CONSERVATION CORNER from page 3

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR CLEAN WATER, PARKS, AND COASTAL PROTECTION

California will experience a dramatic increase in population in the next few decades, with 25 million new residents expected by 2040. The state’s investment in infrastructure, however, is not keeping pace with this growth. Current funding for programs that protect natural resources and the environmental is critically low and constitutes less than 1 percent of the entire state budget. We must make the investment now to ensure that all Californians have access to safe drinking water, better protection from floods, and opportunities to enjoy the natural landscape.

Proposition 84, the Clean Water, Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond, establishes a \$5.4 billion bond that will provide fund-

ing to protect water quality; restore rivers, lakes, and streams; preserve coastlines and major bays; strengthen flood protection; expand the California State Park system; protect forests and wildlife; and create local and regional parks, especially in park-poor communities.

Proposition 84 is supported by a broad, nonpartisan coalition of businesses, governmental agencies, and conservation, community, and park groups. Join Golden Gate Audubon in investing in the long-term health of our natural resources and natural areas. Vote “yes” on Proposition 84. To find out more, go to www.cleanwater2006.com.

ALBANY SHORELINE INITIATIVE BLOCKED FROM BALLOT

Despite being one of the most publicized initiatives to hit Albany in a decade, a court ruled against putting the Albany Shoreline

Protection Initiative on the November ballot, saying proponents did not meet statutory requirements for notice. Although it is profoundly disappointing that citizens will not get to vote on this measure, the Albany City Council has agreed to begin a citywide planning process that will allow everyone’s voices to be heard.

Developer Caruso Affiliated has pulled its mall proposal for the shoreline, but Magna Entertainment Corp, owner of Golden Gate Fields, may well return with another development scheme. We’ll continue to protect the Albany waterfront from any plan for a shoreline mall or expanded gambling. It is more important now than ever for residents to vote in the upcoming Albany election, holding current council members and upcoming candidates accountable for what happens on the Albany shoreline. For more information, visit www.albanyshoreline.org.



SPEAKER SERIES

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m. At 7 p.m., delicious snacks are served by hospitality coordinator Susanne Shields. Speaker Series coordinator is Sarah Reed.

Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of the Bay Area

Debbie Viess

San Francisco: Friday, October 13

Berkeley: Thursday, October 19

Whatever your aim—learning more about the natural world, finding new charismatic subjects for photography and illustration, or safely collecting delicious wild mushrooms for the table—you will find something of interest in Debbie Viess's lecture on the wealth of mushrooms found in the Bay Area. Using stories, slides from top West Coast photographers, and a heaping helping of humor, she will introduce you to the wonderful and tragically unsung world of mushrooms. She will even show how mushrooms are critical to the existence of one of California's spectacular owls.

Debbie Viess, aka "Amanitarita," is a biologist, avid birder, writer, and artist who has been obsessed with the study of mushrooms in general, and amanita mushrooms in particular, for the past 15 years. She was education chair of the Mycological Society of San Francisco for five years and is a cofounder of the new Bay Area Mycological Society. The first person to teach mushroom field classes with the California Academy of Sciences, she lectures to mushroom societies and the general public throughout the Bay Area and across the country. She is currently working on an illustrated monograph of California amanitas. Viess is teaching a class, *Zen and the Art of Mushroom Hunting*, for Golden Gate Audubon in early November. The class also includes a field trip. See below for details.



Tish Moreno

*Debbie Viess with a basket of edible mushrooms collected by David Arora, author of *Mushrooms Demystified*, the mushroom hunter's bible.*

San Francisco: County Fair Building, San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way. Directions: www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html

Berkeley: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm

Golden Gate Audubon Classes

November classes will be held at new venues. Berkeley: Live Oak Recreation Center, 1301 Shattuck Avenue, next to Live Oak Park. San Francisco: Presidio Officers' Club, 50 Moraga Avenue at Arguello Boulevard. For directions, go to www.presidio.gov/directions/visitor.htm. To register, contact GGA Office Manager Tara Zuardo at 510.843.2222.

History of Western Ornithology

Harry Fuller

Berkeley: Thursday, November 2,

6:30 – 9 p.m.; **San Francisco:** Thursday,

November 9, 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Who was the Wilson of Wilson's Warbler? The Nuttall of Nuttall's Woodpecker? The Steller of Steller's Jay? How did the names of these individuals wind up on some of our favorite birds? Come hear the fascinating stories of these and other naturalists and birders and learn about the early days of American ornithology. The slide lecture will include extensive handouts. Berkeley fee: \$15 for GGA Supporting Members, \$20 for nonmembers. San Francisco fee: \$10 for GGA members, \$15 for nonmembers.

Harry has researched ornithological history extensively and has published articles on pioneer birders. He also leads trips in and beyond the Bay Area.

Zen and the Art of Mushroom Hunting

Debbie Viess

Lecture: Friday, November 3,

7:30 – 9 p.m.; **Field Trip:** Sunday,

November 5, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Discover the world of mushrooms with an experienced and engaging guide. The workshop consists of an evening slide lecture, including hands-on material, and a day in the field at a premier mushrooming location. Fee: \$30 for GGA Supporting Members, \$40 for nonmembers.

Debbie is the featured presenter in the October Speaker Series (see story above).

Joe Morlan's Fall Birding Classes

The second sessions of Joe Morlan's three fall evening classes, endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, start in early November.

Field Ornithology I, an introductory course, covers basic field skills and bird behavior. Field Ornithology II and III are in-depth classes that focus on bird identification. Slides illustrate all lectures. Participants should also bring binoculars to class.

All classes meet in the evening at the Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street, San Francisco. Optional field trips on weekends may be arranged. For details, see the September *Gull*. For further information, call 415.561.1860. See also Joe Morlan's website: <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/fall06.htm>.



FIELD TRIPS

SUSAN GROVES, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

🚲 Biking trip

Detailed trip descriptions are located on our website at www.goldengateaudubon.org. If you need further information or have difficulty reaching a trip leader, please contact Susan Groves at 510.654.5954 or groves.susan@gmail.com.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, October 1, November 5,
8 – 10:30 a.m.

Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna,
415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall,
650.349.3780

Meet at front gate of garden, 9th Ave. at
Lincoln Way. The garden's microhabitats
attract an array of resident, migrant, and
vagrant birds.

Las Gallinas

Marin County

Thursdays, October 5, 12, 19, 26,
8:30 a.m. – noon

Bruce Bajema, 415.456.6271

Meet at Las Gallinas parking lot. GGA
joins with Marin Audubon on these trips
to a wonderful place for viewing interest-
ing birds up close.

Take 101 north and exit at Lucas Valley Dr. Go east on
Smith Ranch Rd. to county park. Take a sharp left to
sewage treatment ponds. Drive past headquarters
to parking lot on left.

Bicycle Trip:

Folsom to Sacramento

Sacramento County

Saturday October 7

Blair and Kathy Jarrett,
510.547.1233 (no calls after 9 p.m.),
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

This full-day trip covers the 33-mile
American River Trail, starting at the
Historic Folsom Light Rail Station at 10:30
a.m. (2 hours later than specified in the
September *Gull*). Trip is by reservation
only and is limited to 6 persons. Recent
cycling experience is a must to ensure the
stamina necessary for such a long ride.
Call or email leader to reserve a space.
Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels.

Participants can travel to and from the trail by
Capitol Corridor train in combination with Light Rail
to Folsom, or drive to Sacramento and take Light Rail
to Folsom. Consult leader for details.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturdays, October 7, November 4,
10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis,
SF Nature Education, Darin Dawson, SF
Botanical Garden Docent. 415.387.9160

Meet at front gate of garden, 9th Ave. at
Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children
must be accompanied by an adult.

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Fremont

Sunday, October 8, 8:30 a.m.

Pamela Llewellyn, 510.843.7904 (h),
510.316.8932 (cell)

Meet at Visitor Center lot for this half-day
trip covering the varied habitats of this
jewel of a park looking for wintering water-
fowl, waders, songbirds, and raptors.

From East Bay take I-880 south to 84/Dumbarton
Bridge exit. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and
continue north 1 mile; turn left on Patterson Ranch
Rd. to Coyote Hills. Parking kiosk may be self-serve;
bring \$5 bill.

Eastern Golden Gate Park

San Francisco

Saturday, October 14, 9 a.m. – noon

Harry Fuller, 415.344.2363,
anzatowhee@yahoo.com

Meet at intersection of John F. Kennedy
Dr. and Conservatory Dr. East. We will dis-
cover the great diversity of birds attracted
to the park's eastern oak woodlands,



Bob Lewis.

Willet, a common sight in fall.

looking for resident species, wintering
birds, and late migrants.

Coyote Creek Field Station and South Bay Wetlands

Santa Clara County

Sunday, October 15, 8 a.m.

Howard Higley, 650.968.7513,
hhigley@ccsainc.com

Meet in front of Borders in McCarthy
Ranch Mall to carpool. Until 10 a.m., we
will see a banding demonstration and
bird the riparian corridor and waterbird
pond at San Francisco Bay Bird Obser-
vatory project area. Trip includes orien-
tation by SFBBO education coordinator.
Participants can join trip later, meeting at
Alviso Marina around 10 a.m. Remainder
of trip will include New Chicago Marsh,
Environmental Education Center, Arzino
Ranch area, and/or Sunnyvale Baylands
Park and Water Pollution Control Ponds.
Possible birds: late shorebird migrants,

Carpool to Field Trips

It's easy to carpool on GGA field trips. To join the mail list group, just go to
<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>. Once you join, you can send and
receive messages about carpools. Give your message a title, "Offer Ride" or "Need
Ride," plus location and date of the field trip. In the body of the message, note
your approximate location (El Cerrito, South Berkeley, etc.). Others who read your
message will contact you to arrange a carpool. Give it a try! If you have a problem
accessing or using the email list group, contact Bob Lewis at RLewis0727@aol.com.
Need a carpool but don't have a computer? Call Claire at 510.528.1155.

gulls and terns, early-arriving waterfowl, marsh birds, passerines in riparian and parklands, and Burrowing Owl. Let leader know in advance if you are interested in SFBBO portion of trip so times of morning activities may be adjusted. Bring scope, if available, and lunch. Entrance fee for non-SFBBO members is \$10.

From SF, take 101 south to 237 east. Exit at McCarthy Blvd. (before 880), turn left over freeway to Ranch Rd., and then right into Borders parking lot. For Alviso Marina, take 101 south to 237 and exit Great America Parkway/Lafayette. Turn left under freeway, right to Gold St. connector, left on Gold to end, left on Elizabeth St. across tracks, and right on Hope to end. Park in Marina.

Meeker Slough

Richmond

Sunday, October 15

Marilyn Nasatir, 510.845.1029,
mnasatir@berkeley.edu

The Watershed Project, an environmental education organization located at UC's Richmond Field Station, will have an open house, noon to 3 p.m., with tours of marsh restoration project as well as family-oriented activities. GGA's Marilyn Nasatir will lead two birding walks, at 12:30 and 3 p.m., at marsh and along Bay Trail to see what birds are coming to the restoration project. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. For more information, go to www.thewatershedproject.org.

From I-580 in Richmond, take Bayview exit and go southwest toward bay. Follow Bayview as it curves and becomes Meade St.; turn left on South 47th St.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, October 20, 8 a.m.

Charles Hibbard, Lewis Ellingham,
Brian Fitch

Meet at Randall Museum, end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We'll enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and the north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitor the hilltop scrub and south cliff. For more information, contact Margaret Goodale, 415.554.9500, ext. 16, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org.

Lake Merritt

Oakland

Saturday, October 21, 9 a.m.

GGA Member Discount on Farallons Research Trip

On October 14 and 15, marine biologists from the Oceanic Research Center will lead an overnight intensive research course to the Farallon Islands on the *White Holly*, a 133-foot oceanographic research vessel. While the vessel is anchored overnight at the Farallons, students will learn methods of oceanographic research and marine wildlife observation and will participate in sampling the water and plankton, surveying seabirds and marine mammals, and other hands-on tasks.

The course is open to 12 students. The trip departs at 8 a.m. on Saturday, October 14, and returns the next day at 5 p.m. The fee, including course materials and meals, is \$525. GGA Supporting members pay \$505. For more information and to register, go to www.whiteholly.com/courseintro.html.

Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. This trip is an introduction to birding as well as an opportunity to study birds that are more difficult to identify. First half focuses on waterbirds. Second half is in parklands bordering lake where we expect to see smaller birds. Vagrant species occur frequently at Lake Merritt. Route is handicapped accessible.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins. Walk into park on Perkins, or park in free lot at boathouse, 568 Bellevue. Cage is at far end of parking lot from boathouse.

20th Annual Pt. Reyes National Seashore All-Day Birding Blitz

Marin County

Saturday, October 21, 8 a.m.

Cathy Purchis, catpur@value.net;
Leon Abrams, leonabrams@earthlink.net

Meet at Five Brooks Trailhead parking lot, 3.5 miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1. This fast-paced multihabitat trip covers Five Brooks Pond area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock, and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley and producing approximately 100 species. Bring food, water, and layered clothing for variable weather. Cosponsored with Ohlone Audubon Society and National Park Service.

SF Birds at Merrie Way

Sunday, October 22, 8 a.m.

Harry Fuller, 415.344.2363,
anzatowhee@yahoo.com

Meet at Merrie Way, the unpaved parking lot at west end of Pt. Lobos above Cliff House at Land's End. We'll look for resident and migrant birds, including wintering landbirds, shorebirds on the rocks, and loons and other wintering waterbirds on the ocean.

Email leader for transit info.

Glen Canyon Park

San Francisco

Sunday, October 22, 9 a.m.

David Armstrong, 415.305.7681,
darmstrong99@yahoo.com

Meet in front of Glen Park Recreation Center, adjacent to tennis courts and ballfield, for a bird walk along one of the city's longest intact riparian corridors. Nestled between Mt. Davidson and Diamond Heights, Glen Canyon has open grasslands, rock outcroppings, eucalyptus/conifer woodlands, and wonderful streamside willows that provide habitat for Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned Owls, and Nuttall's Woodpeckers, as well as many warblers and sparrows.

Take Muni line #44 or take BART to Glen Park station and walk .5 mile. Parking is available on Elk St. or at very end of Bosworth St.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, October 22, 9:30 a.m.

Carol Kiser, SF Maritime National Historical Park Ranger, 415.561.7100 or 561.7104

Meet at foot of Hyde Street Pier, at Hyde and Jefferson, for this 2-hour beginners'

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

walk to discover birds in the urban environment. Trip is wheelchair accessible.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, October 25,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net; Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. For directions, see October 21 trip.

Jewel Lake in Tilden Park

Berkeley

Friday, October 27, 8:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156, philajane@msn.com

Meet at Environmental Education Center parking lot at north end of Central Dr. in Tilden Park for a morning walk around Jewel Lake looking for winter residents. Trip ends at 10:30 a.m., or later if conditions permit. Rain cancels.

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Fremont

Saturday, October 28, 8:30 a.m.

Anne Hoff, 510.845.5908, Anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Meet at Visitor Center parking lot for this half-day trip. For description of habitat and directions see October 8 trip. \$

Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline

Richmond

Sunday, October 29, 8 a.m.

Matt Ricketts, 510.527.5763, msrparulid@sbcglobal.net

Meet at parking lot at park entrance for this half-day trip. We'll check the eucalyptus grove and old orchards for vagrant passerines and the bay for shorebirds, waterfowl, and other waterbirds.

From I-80 in Richmond, exit at Richmond Pkwy., turn right onto Giant Hwy., and proceed to park entrance. Weekend parking fee is \$5. \$

Heron's Head Park and Pier 94

San Francisco

Sunday, October 29, 8 a.m.

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com, 415.355.0450 (email preferred)

Meet at entrance to Heron's Head Park to explore this beautifully restored tidal marsh that is now a natural oasis for resident and migrating shorebirds, waders, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. Leader is one of the members of the GGA San Francisco Conservation Committee completing a photographic field guide to the park's birds. After a hiking out to tip of Heron's Head and looking around India Basin, participants will carpool to a more recent but less accessible restoration site, Pier 94, to look for more birds and see how unstable bay lands can be transformed into vital wildlife habitat.

Take I-280 or 101 and exit at Cesar Chavez/Army St. Go east on Cesar Chavez, and turn right on Third St. and left on Cargo Way, which ends at park entrance. Or take #19 Polk bus to Evans Ave. and Jennings St. and walk down Jennings to Cargo Way.

Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl

Solano and Yolo Counties

Saturday, November 4, 8 a.m.

Terry Colborn, 530.758.0689 (h), 916.705.8991 (cell), tlcgdc@aol.com

Meet in Dixon in southwest corner of Wal-Mart parking lot on East Dorset Dr. at the Hwy. 113 exit off I-80. The open agricultural lands of Solano and Yolo provide

great foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area are the winter home for thousands of waterfowl. On this all-day trip, we will visit some of the local hot spots in search of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Merlin and Prairie Falcons, Burrowing, Barn and Great-horned Owls, and Mountain Plovers. We also expect to see a representative sampling of waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area. Bring a lunch and liquids; dress in layers. Carpool if possible, using the GGA carpooling website!

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Fremont

Saturday, November 4, 8 a.m.

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936, rfscalf@sbcglobal.net

Meet at Visitor Center parking lot for this half-day trip covering the trails, freshwater wetlands, and grasslands. For description and directions, see October 8 trip.

Golden Gate Park's Chain of Lakes

San Francisco

Saturday, November 4, 9 a.m. – noon

Alan Hopkins, 415.664.0983, ash@sfo.com

Meet at parking lot between South and North Lakes along Chain of Lakes Dr. between John F. Kennedy Dr. and Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. The Chain of Lakes was once known as "willow swamps," the only natural body of water in park. Now greatly changed, the lakes still provide some of the city's best bird habitat. As we watch the birds, we will also consider plants that make the Chain of Lakes great habitat.

Pinnacles National Monument

Sunday, November 5, 9 a.m.

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936, rfscalf@sbcglobal.net

Meet at concessionaire parking lot, on left before entering park. The lot is in front of general store. Email leader if interested in attending. He'll respond with trip description. For directions, maps, and other information, go to www.nps.gov/pinn. \$

Mark Your Calendar—Don't Miss the 2006 Christmas Bird Count

Every year in December, Bay Area birders volunteer to count birds, contributing to a national database that tracks the population of wintering species. Golden Gate Audubon sponsors two Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). The Oakland CBC will be held on Sunday, December 17, the San Francisco CBC on Thursday December 28. Look for details in the November *Gull*. To learn more, go to Birding and Wildlife Resources on our website, www.goldengateaudubon.org.



LOONS TO DUCKS

Pelagic trip boats returned to the seas in August, with trips to the Farallon Islands (SF) on the 6th and 20th and trips to Bodega Cyn. and Cordell Bank (MRN) on the 7th, 15th, and 28th. The Aug. 15 boat recorded 3 Laysan Albatrosses and both Flesh-footed and Short-tailed Shearwaters (DS; mob). The Aug. 6 Farallons trip sighted a **Manx Shearwater** (*Puffinus puffinus*) (DS, ASH; mob). From land, an Aug. 12 seawatch recorded 11 Pink-footed and 12 Buller's Shearwaters off the SM coast (RT).

The Aug. 28 boat trip to Bodega Cyn. and Cordell Bank was particularly good for storm-petrels, reporting a Wilson's, Fork-tailed, Black, and 450 Ashy Storm-Petrels (DS; mob). Landlubbers spotted a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel from Pigeon Pt., SM, on the 12th (RT) and an Ashy Storm-Petrel off Ocean Beach, SF, on the 22nd (PS). Both boat trippers and a shore-based observer ID'd a **Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*) at SE Farallon Island on the 20th (PJ, ME; MB), conceivably the same bird that visited Año Nuevo SR in June.

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A Pacific Golden-Plover spent 3 days at the Gilroy Sewage Treatment Plant, SCL, beginning the 9th (BRe, FV) and 4 more made camp in Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON, Aug. 18–27 (KP, RS; mob). The month's solitary Solitary Sandpiper visited a stock pond in Moss Beach, SM, on the 27th (RT). At least 7 Semipalmated Sandpipers passed through by the 11th and 26+ Baird's Sandpipers transited through, beginning the 7th (mob).

Starting the 18th, New Chicago Marsh in Alviso (SCL) hosted 2 Pectoral Sandpipers (EDB; mob) and solo Pectorals were reported on the 27th at Doran Park, Bodega Bay, SON (MS), and on the 29th at Las Gallinas Water Treatment Plant in San Rafael, MRN (DR). Two Silt Sandpipers tarried at Bodega Bay on the 20th (MMe). Good numbers of Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes moved through this month, along with scattered Red Phalaropes.



Red-necked Phalarope at Hayward Area Regional Shoreline.

Charles Denson

Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers turned up on the coast in mid-month.

Nine Sabine's Gulls came within ID range off Ocean Blvd in Moss Beach on the 7th (RT) and the Aug. 15 Cordell Bank trip racked up 120 (DS; mob). Beginning the 7th, Common Terns were located at a half-dozen locations. Both boats to Cordell Bank on the 7th and 15th noted Commons (RS, DS; mob) and the Aug. 7 boat added a couple Arctic Terns. Up to 11 Black Terns were tallied at Sunnyvale Water Treatment Facility, SCL, Aug. 4–7 (ML; BRe, FV, MMe) and another was noted at the Hayward RS Interpretive Center, ALA, on the 14th (BRI).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A White-winged Dove flew into San Jose Airport, SCL, on the 14th (BE). Black-

chinned Hummingbirds invaded the N. Bay, with up to 5 reported at a San Rafael feeder (MRN) Aug. 10–28 (KJR) and single birds at Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, on the 14th (RS) and in NAP, NAP, on the 25th (DII). In the S. Bay, a Morgan Hill, SCL, feeder attracted a Black-chinned on the 19th (SR). An Eastern Kingbird was discovered near Wright's Beach, SON, on the 20th (EV). Nunes Ranch trapped a vagrant Red-eyed Vireo on the 30th (RS).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

The last week of August, outer Pt. Reyes and other coastal locales saw an early influx of vagrant warblers, most notably a **Connecticut Warbler** (*Oporornis agilis*) that lingered 3 days at Nunes Ranch, beginning the 27th (RS; RH). Other noteworthy warbler sightings included a Virginia's Warbler, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, a couple Black-and-white Warblers, 8 American Redstarts, and a Hooded Warbler.

An Aug. 30 survey of outer Pt. Reyes produced 2 Brewer's and a Black-throated Sparrow (RS). In SM, Vesper Sparrows were located on the 22nd along Cloverdale Rd. (JRy) and on the 24th at Coyote Pt. (RT). Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and 4 Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported this month. An Orchard Oriole returned to Fort Mason, SF, on the 29th (DA, HC). Finally, a Pine Grosbeak revealed himself at Hidden L. Park in Martinez, CC, on the 21st (AB).

Charles Denson, Editor, Observations, The Gull, Vol. 33, No. 1, October 2006

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Brent Plater for assistance in compiling data.

Abbreviations for Observers: AB, Ari Bose; ASH, Alan Hopkins; AV, Ann Verdi; BE, Bruce Elliott; BRe, Bob Reiling; BRI, Bob Richmond; DA, David Armstrong; DH, Denise Hamilton; DR, Don Reinberg; DS, Debi Shearwater; EDB, Ed DeBellevue; EV, Ed Vermeulen; FV, Frank Vanslager; HC, Hugh Cotter; JM, Jean Myers; JP, Janna Pauser; JRi, Jean Richmond; JRy, Jennifer Rycenga; KJR, Karen Jo Rippens; KP, Kathy Parker; LS, Linda Sullivan; MB, Matt Brady; ME, Michael Ellis; ML, Mike Lee; MMe, Megan Megey; MMe, Mike Mammoser; MS, Michael Stevenson; PJ, Paul Jones; PS, Paul Saraceni; RH, Roger Harshaw; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; SR, Steve Rottenborn; WM, W. Merkle

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; BBA, Breeding Bird Atlas; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek, Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MDSP, Mount Diablo State Park; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NSMWA, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point, Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

channel that flows between the lake and the Oakland Estuary, a popular destination for birders. Recognizing Lake Merritt's importance to both wildlife and the community, Golden Gate Audubon has sought to protect and enhance the natural resource values of Lake Merritt and its channel, as well as nearby aquatic areas.

A primary concern is the lake's water quality. The City of Oakland designed its stormwater drainage system so that it discharges a significant portion of the city's stormwater runoff into the lake through approximately 60 stormdrain outfalls. These discharges degrade the quality of the aquatic environment in many ways, but two in particular stand out.

One is the introduction into the lake of stormwater-borne refuse and trash from the lake's almost entirely urbanized watershed. Statistics kept by the Lake Merritt Institute, a nonprofit organization that works with the City of Oakland, reveal that during the

are below the minimum standard set by the San Francisco Bay Basin Plan, a compilation of water-quality standards for San Francisco Bay issued by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. Due to the presence of trash and the low DO, the lake is now listed as an "impaired water body" under the Clean Water Act.

Golden Gate Audubon sits on a technical advisory committee formed by the city to develop strategies for addressing Lake Merritt's water-quality problems. Through the committee's efforts, three structural stormwater filtration devices have been installed on separate stormdrain lines to capture stormwater-borne trash before it reaches the lake. The committee is evaluating the feasibility of installing such devices on other stormdrain lines and is also looking at a range of other strategies to address the lake's low DO, including a lakewide system of aeration bubblers.

RESTORING THE LAKE'S BIRD ISLANDS

Among the most prominent features of Lake Merritt's avian habitat are its five islands. These islands provide roosting and nesting habitat for Snowy and Great Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons and (to a lesser extent) Great Blue Herons, and Double-crested Cormorants. They also offer sanctuary and seclusion for Mallards, scaups, Canvasbacks, and other diving and dabbling ducks. The condition of the islands, however, is far from ideal. An abundance of dead, dying, and otherwise inappropriate non-native vegetation fills the islands, and a rudimentary irrigation system is in a severe state of disrepair. The city, with the support of its technical advisory committee, has secured a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to fund a bird island enhancement project that will ameliorate, if not complete rectify, many of these conditions.

Perhaps most exciting for birders is phase two of the project—the creation of an intertidal wetland habitat area among the lake's outermost four islands. If successful, this undertaking would significantly increase the lake's habitat diversity by reintroducing a type of wetland habitat that has not existed at the lake for more a century.



Charles Denson

Displaying Snowy Egret on Lake Merritt's bird islands.

NEW WETLANDS FOR LAKE MERRITT CHANNEL

In 2002 Oakland residents passed Measure DD, which provides funding for a new six-lane boulevard along the southern end of the lake. The culverts beneath 10th and 12th Streets through which the Lake Merritt Channel currently flows will be replaced with free-span bridges. Removal of these constraints on the channel's flow will increase tidal fluctuation and water exchange in the lake. This will, in turn, bring significant water-quality benefits. As an additional part of the project, a new intertidal wetland area will be created in the part of Peralta Park closest to the Lake Merritt Channel. This wetland will contribute much-needed habitat diversity to the Lake Merritt setting. Furthermore, a portion of the stormwater runoff from the new highway structure will be routed into the new wetland area—where wetland vegetation will filter out contaminated sediments and other pollutants—instead of being discharged untreated into the lake or the channel.

Golden Gate Audubon has actively supported these plans throughout their development. Most recently, we presented testimony before the Oakland planning commission urging certification of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report that the city prepared for this project.

At the opposite end of the Lake Merritt Channel from the work at 10th and 12th Streets, Caltrans is in the process of replacing the structure that supports the I-880

OAKLAND WATERWAYS continued on page 11



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Barrow's Goldeneye, a species of special concern under the California Endangered Species Act. Both Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes winter in the Lake Merritt Channel.

rainy season, from November to April, an average of 5,000 to 6,000 pounds of trash is removed every month. Secondly, stormwater drains discharge significant quantities of leaves, pet feces, and other organic material into the lake. This material undergoes bacterial decomposition, a process that consumes large amounts of oxygen. As a result, levels of dissolved oxygen (DO) in the lake

freeway where it crosses over the channel. After carefully evaluating the project, Golden Gate Audubon determined that, because it involves a wider road surface compared with the existing structure, it will have unmitigated adverse effects on the habitat value of the channel. We presented testimony to this effect before the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which has jurisdiction over the project. We then entered into negotiations, which included a site visit with Caltrans. Caltrans has now agreed to construct a small mitigation wetland along the east bank of the channel at the base of and just north of the new overpass. The project is in keeping with the goals of the city's Estuary Policy Plan. This plan, which Golden Gate Audubon helped formulate, calls for restored wetlands along both banks of the channel between the estuary and the Seventh Street flood control facility.

MONITORING NEW DEVELOPMENT

Golden Gate Audubon has also been actively involved in reviewing and commenting on

the Oak-to-Ninth project, which has been referred to as the largest residential development in Oakland since World War II. The project involves the construction of approximately 3,100 units of residential housing that will be located directly on the Oakland Estuary between the city's Estuary Park (adjacent to the mouth of the Lake Merritt Channel), on the west, and the Ninth Avenue Terminal, on the east. The area of the Oak-to-Ninth development includes the site of the Clinton Basin/Seabreeze Yacht Harbor Wetland Restoration, a mitigation project undertaken by the Port of Oakland in collaboration with Golden Gate Audubon. This project has two principal components: the dredging of a channel to create a protected island where birds can roost and the planting of native cordgrass, pickleweed, and other wetland vegetation, along with the eradication of non-native *Spartina alterniflora*. Although the proposed development preserves the restoration site, we are engaged in ongoing discussions with the developer of the project on the issue of

OAKLAND WATERWAYS continued on page 12

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

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The Stewardship Council: Eco-Oakland Program

Save the Quail Restore-A-Thon

Saturday, November 18, 2006 • 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- ☐ I would like to join a work party.
- ☐ I will sponsor myself at \$ _____ per hour. Please send me a pledge form so that I can also seek pledges from friends and family.
- ☐ I will sponsor the Golden Gate Audubon volunteer team or _____ at \$ _____ per hour or give a total donation of \$ _____. (Suggested minimum pledge rate: \$15 per hour.)
- ☐ I can't participate in the Restore-A-Thon but want to help! Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____.

NAME _____

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Sponsors contributing \$30 or more receive a California Quail cap.
Please RSVP by November 10 to help us prepare for the event.

Make checks payable to **Golden Gate Audubon Society** and mail to:

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702

Or go to www.goldengateaudubon.org to sign up and make a donation.

how the site's maintenance needs will be addressed in the future.

Another part of the Oak-to-Ninth project is the construction of a large park on the opposite bank of the Lake Merritt Channel from Estuary Park. Initial plans showed a hardened, concrete shoreline edge along the channel—in direct conflict with the city's Estuary Policy Plan, which calls for restored wetlands. As a result of numerous discussions and presentations to focus groups by Golden Gate Audubon, restored wetland vegetation is a component of the latest Oak-to-Ninth plan.

GATEWAY WATERFONT TRAIL

Although the 66th Avenue Gateway Waterfront Trail is somewhat removed geographically from the vicinity of Lake Merritt, Golden Gate Audubon's work on this project promises to lead to significant habitat enhancements that will benefit local wildlife. The project is part of a larger undertaking by the city to construct a waterfront trail along the entire length of the Oakland estuary between Jack London Square and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline

in San Leandro Bay. The MLK Jr. shoreline includes one of Golden Gate Audubon's most significant accomplishments—the restoration of a 72-acre wetland—and is the location for activities in our Eco-Oakland Program for students and their families.

The 66th Avenue project affords an opportunity to improve the habitat of an adjacent part of San Leandro Bay—Damon Slough, one of the major watercourses that flow into the bay. Also known as Garretson Point, Damon Slough was originally tidal flats but over the years was filled with concrete rubble and other construction debris. Current plans call for the creation of a network of pedestrian pathways on a relatively small portion of the site and wetland restoration on a much larger portion. Funding from Measure DD will pay for the pedestrian trail. Discussions with the Port of Oakland are under way about providing funding for the project's wetland restoration component as a means to obtain mitigation credits that the port needs to facilitate improvements at the nearby Oakland International Airport. We are cautiously optimistic that these discussions will be successful.

Through the advocacy work on these

projects, Golden Gate Audubon is committed to the goal of enhancing habitat diversity for wildlife in ways that complement our related efforts at the Eastshore State Park, Alameda Wildlife Refuge, and other areas of the East Bay.

by John Bowers,
East Bay Conservation Committee

John Bowers is also a member of the board of directors of the Lake Merritt Institute.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Experience the habitats and birdlife of Lake Merritt for yourself by joining one of our field trips (see pages 6 and 7). With the coming of fall, migrating ducks are arriving at the lake to spend the winter with the resident cormorants and other birds. To learn more about the many exciting changes under way at Lake Merritt and nearby areas of Oakland, come to a meeting of the East Bay Conservation Committee. The meetings, which are enjoyable and informative, take place quarterly at the Golden Gate Audubon office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. For details contact Samantha Murray, Conservation Director, smurray@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.6551.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Gull is the newsletter of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The Gull*, a 10 percent discount on items purchased at our Nature Store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

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